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## Second Committee

**Summary record of the 22nd meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 31 October 2002, at 3 p.m.

*Chairman*: Mr. Suazo ..... (Honduras)

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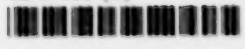

*The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.*

**Agenda item 92: Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields** (*continued*) (A/57/75-E/2002/57, A/57/343, A/57/444)

1. **Ms. Rodsmoen** (Norway), noting that development issues were now higher on the global agenda than ever before, said that it was essential to adjust the programme of work in order to support the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The historic United Nations conferences held over the past decade had placed considerable demands on both Member States and the United Nations Secretariat, in which context she agreed with the Secretary-General's comments concerning summit fatigue and the need for self-restraint in calling for further conferences. The existing structures should be more effectively used in following up, coordinating and implementing the outcomes of such conferences. The General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary machinery should play primary roles, thereby additionally strengthening the relevance and impact of the General Assembly. Norway had concluded a national plan of action on poverty reduction and was also elaborating a similar plan on sustainable development. The resident coordinator system had an important role to play in promoting the integration of such implementation into country assistance programmes and in enhancing United Nations system coordination at the country level, including through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). The coordinated follow-up of conferences was an increasingly pressing topic on which various reports, recommendations and proposals had already been produced. The next essential step was therefore to achieve full integration between the review and follow-up of the Millennium Summit and other conferences, particularly in view of the overriding priority which should be attached to attainment of the MDGs. In that connection, she emphasized the important function of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and the Millennium Campaign. Bearing in mind the major results expected in the aftermath of the major conferences which had taken place, her Government was ready to engage in immediate discussions to finalize important questions such as the role of the Economic and Social Council and the Bretton Woods dialogue in the follow-up process and the high-level dialogue of the General Assembly as an important stepping stone in that process.

2. **Ms. Liu** Hue (China) said that strict adherence to the objectives, principles and commitments agreed by the international community with regard to international cooperation for development would guarantee the integrated and coordinated follow-up of the major development-related conferences held over the past decade. Adequate financing, transfer of technology on favourable terms and capacity-building were key aspects of the follow-up activities in question. Her delegation would be making constructive proposals in the Committee's forthcoming discussions on the subject of those activities, which should take into account the division of labour and cooperation needed among United Nations bodies in order to enhance coordination and effectiveness in implementing conference outcomes. Basic indicators were helpful tools in measuring the progress of such implementation in that they assisted review and evaluation as a whole and reduced the burden of multiple submissions of data. In that connection, she stressed that the limited number of common indicators should be selected from among those currently accepted and widely used by Member States. The full participation of all countries in that selection constituted an important principle, as did approval of the selected indicators by the concerned government agencies. Such indicators should be confined to those already contained in the outcome documents and their application should take full account of the conditions, varying stages of development and statistical capabilities of each individual country. The issue of indicators, including actions beyond the national level, should be fully studied with due regard for the views of the functional commissions concerning the use of indicators in their respective areas of work.

3. **Mr. Isakov** (Russian Federation) said that coordinated implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits required more effective and focused oversight processes. At present there was a proliferation of individual oversight processes, with it a risk of duplication and error. His delegation favoured the three-tiered system involving the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the functional commissions. It was expedient gradually to move away from the practice of automatic five-year reviews, and

broader and more effective use should be made of existing intergovernmental mechanisms by, for example, holding special meetings in the framework of regular sessions of the General Assembly. In September 2002, for example, an exceptionally important and very successful high-level meeting of the General Assembly had been held on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), with high-level participation and panel discussions. The time had come to find the best mechanisms for integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, and his delegation welcomed the idea of using the current session of the General Assembly to discuss all such questions in the context of an open-ended special working group of the General Assembly which would have the mandate to consider not merely the economic but also the social summits and conferences of the United Nations.

4. **Mr. Chaudhry** (Pakistan) concurred with the view that implementation was the key to the coherent, balanced and comprehensive follow-up to conference outcomes and that strengthening of the engagement and interest of all stakeholders was essential. He also associated himself with the earlier statement on the subject made by the Venezuelan representative on behalf of the Group of 77 and remarked that, despite the many efforts deployed, a concrete follow-up and implementation mechanism remained elusive. On that score, he regretted the inability of the General Assembly to provide the necessary guidance to the Secretary-General, whose inputs on the subject he nevertheless appreciated. His delegation had submitted a proposal aimed at securing adequate follow-up through the establishment of an integrated, comprehensive and coordinated follow-up and implementation mechanism to review and monitor implementation of the outcomes of major United Nations conferences. Given its universality and overarching responsibilities, the United Nations should be at the centre of that proposed mechanism, which should function at three levels: the functional commissions, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. Any substantive review should be carried out, under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, by functional commissions with individually assigned areas of responsibility, such as trade and development, finance and development and sustainable development. They should take into account the relevant goals and commitments adopted at the Millennium Summit, as well as those relating to cross-cutting issues in the follow-up and implementation process.

5. His delegation had also proposed the establishment of two separate commissions on trade and on finance to address the discernible absence of a follow-up mechanism at the expert level that could pursue commitments and heighten the focus of discussion, with the participation of other stakeholders, in those two areas. The rotation of venues for the meetings of those two commissions had similarly been proposed as a means of strengthening interaction between the United Nations and other stakeholders. He stressed that the proposed functional commission on trade and development would not encroach upon the mandate of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD); on the contrary, it would reinforce its message and also take guidance from the UNCTAD Trade and Development Board. In the interest of consensus, however, his delegation was ready to explore possible cost-effective alternatives to the establishment of new structures that could have budgetary implications. Another option would be to explore ways of covering the expenses involved from within existing resources by measures such as convening only biennial meetings of functional commissions.

6. The reports and recommendations of the proposed commissions should be considered at the annual high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council, which should then adopt appropriate decisions and perhaps even organize a session dedicated to formulating concrete recommendations with the aim of facilitating integrated and coordinated follow-up and implementation. The General Assembly should similarly review all such reports and recommendations, either under an agenda item of the plenary or by holding a biennial high-level intergovernmental dialogue. In his view, the Second Committee was an inappropriate forum for the integration of economic and social issues. The current agenda item should instead be discussed in the plenary of the General Assembly, to which end consideration might be given to the much-endorsed proposal for an open-ended working group to examine the modalities of the proposed follow-up and implementation mechanism. In conclusion, he stressed that the Pakistani proposal was in the larger interest of all Member States and offered a way to achieve meaningful follow-up and

implementation of the commendable work completed during the past decade.

7. **Mr. Escanero** (Mexico) said that the recent major United Nations conferences and summits had helped to forge a new global agenda for sustainable development. The Millennium Declaration had crystallized the main development objectives, putting particular emphasis on the reduction of extreme poverty and the provision of universal health and educational services within the framework of a balanced gender approach. Each conference or summit had devoted considerable attention to considering the financial resources required for attaining the goals set forth and the Monterrey Consensus had brought those perspectives into sharper focus by summing them up in a single, integrated agenda that provided a strategic framework, spelling out how the efforts of all of the major stakeholders involved in financing for development would be harmonized.

8. Priority should be given to defining transparent and objective indicators to determine progress achieved or setbacks suffered, while also indicating what had to be done to consolidate the positive trends or address shortcomings at the national, regional and international levels, as well as throughout the system.

9. The biggest challenge facing Member States was how to implement the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in an integrated and coordinated manner, with concrete, measurable results while rendering strict account to the peoples of the world. That required a renewed commitment to multilateralism based on joint action and shared responsibility. A resolute effort must be made to update the current institutions and multilateral machinery so as to be able to deal with the realities of the new century, while at the same time strengthening their capabilities and creating ties of mutual cooperation among them. Specifically, the United Nations must become a more modern, flexible institution that was capable of translating the international community's intentions into results.

10. For those reasons, Mexico fully supported the strengthening of the United Nations and efforts to modernize its working methods with a view to a better division of labour among the General Assembly, Economic and Social Council and the functional commissions in the economic, social and environmental spheres. That would call for reorganizing the substantive agenda into themes that would promote a consistent and integrative approach to the international community's commitment to action; applying in a broader and more systematic way formats designed to produce interactive debate, such as round tables or discussion panels; synthesizing and improving analytical and action-oriented reports so that they could feed into deliberations; and negotiating consolidated resolutions designed to foster fluid political dialogue on implementation with all the major stakeholders in the area of development.

11. Modernization of the United Nations in the economic and social spheres must set an example that befitted an institution whose leadership was vital to harmonizing the efforts of governments, regional and international organizations, the private sector and civil society around the idea of decisive action to promote sustainable development worldwide. In that regard, his delegation deemed it useful to set up, before the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly, an open-ended group to consider how to proceed with the modernization of the Organization.

12. **Mr. Motomura** (Japan) reiterated the need to shift the focus on to implementation in order to achieve more tangible results on the ground. The effective translation into action of the summit-level agreements reached at major international conferences was the challenge facing the international community. He questioned the effectiveness of post-conference review processes in contributing to the achievement of poverty reduction, sustained economic growth and sustainable development. During those review processes, which were held in parallel with the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, the same set of issues were repeatedly subject to time-consuming and costly debate. The conclusion of the recent series of major development-related conferences provided the opportune moment for adoption of the more pragmatic and result-oriented approach so urgently needed in following up their outcome. To that end, Member States should consider possible follow-up mechanisms which made effective use of the existing structures within the United Nations system. In that connection, it was appropriate for the Economic and Social Council to pursue a cross-cutting approach to the common themes of major United Nations conferences and play a more central role in follow-up activities. It was also appropriate for the relevant subsidiary bodies and specialized agencies of the United Nations to follow up

the technical matters specific to each conference, while the General Assembly should give overall political direction to the implementation of conference outcomes. In order to take into account any divergent views on the subject, however, he advocated the establishment of an ad hoc working group of the General Assembly as a suitable forum for thorough discussion of the subject, in which his delegation would actively participate.

13. **Mr. Nambiar** (India) said conference follow-up should, first and foremost, address the issue of implementation of the outcomes of United Nations conferences. Shared responsibility did not absolve national Governments, which were primarily responsible for the well-being of their citizens, but meant that indicators measuring progress should be applied to all members of the international community. For developed countries, that meant measuring progress in achieving mutually agreed objectives and targets for ODA, debt relief and market access.

14. The task of reviewing conference implementation required an integrated and coordinated approach to common overarching conference goals and a focused view in order to stimulate progress in the relevant areas. A uniform approach to the follow-up of all United Nations conferences and summits should be adopted. While all Member States had an interest in the follow-up to all conferences, the degree of interest could vary. Agreement on adopting a common approach would make it easier to find a consensus.

15. **Ms. Zubčević** (Croatia) said that the real challenge facing the United Nations system was how to address in a coordinated and coherent manner the implementation of internationally agreed development goals for poverty eradication, sustained economic growth, sustainable development and improved living conditions for people everywhere. The General Assembly, as the main deliberative and policy-making body, should focus on overall policy issues emerging from the follow-up of major conferences and summits and ensure that they were linked to development goals. However, the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies should be responsible for overall guidance and coordination. The Council's role and impact would need to be further strengthened in order to meet the challenges and opportunities of globalization and sustainable development and to promote the effective implementation of development goals, including those of major conferences and summits, thus contributing to an integrated framework for implementation, while at the same time avoiding overlap and enhancing the effectiveness of actions at all levels. The outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits should be fully reflected in the operational work and country frameworks of United Nations system organizations in accordance with national development objectives and priorities.

16. There should be a clearer division of labour among the functional commissions. In that regard, the multi-year programme of those commissions provided a suitable framework for assessing progress in the implementation of major United Nations conferences and summits. It was also important to involve all interested stakeholders, especially the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, as well as the private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society in the implementation of United Nations goals and programmes. Moreover, since Croatia supported strengthening the Council's role in peace-building and the adoption of special measures in favour of countries emerging from prolonged conflict, it welcomed the establishment of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau.

17. Referring to the Monterrey Consensus and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, she said that all parts of the United Nations system must stay engaged in order to implement the outcomes of all the major United Nations conferences and summits. To that end, the Second Committee should play a greater role in providing recommendations for implementation in the economic and social spheres and offer guidance to the plenary of the General Assembly in those areas. With a view to addressing all those challenges, her delegation supported the establishment of an ad hoc open-ended working group with a specific mandate and time limit to work in close collaboration with the Secretariat.

18. **Mr. Gamaleldin** (Egypt) expressed surprise at the fact that the follow-up to the maior United Nations conferences and summits and special sessions organized since the early 1990s was on the agenda only of the Second Committee, although many of those conferences and summits also fell within the mandate of the Third Committee. The primary objective of conference follow-up should be to ensure the implementation of their outcomes, as that was the only way to convince world public opinion and national Governments of the validity and relevance of the United Nations and multilateralism. Each United

Nations conference had its own independent nature and follow-up mechanism. The entire international community would benefit from promoting synergies among the various national and international constituencies of each conference and from making sure that each conference focused on its core area of interest in order to avoid duplication of effort and wastage of resources. It was regrettable that what was decided at the end of one conference was often called into question and reopened at the next conference. In his delegation's view, thematic cross-cutting issues common to all the conferences should be decided at the intergovernmental level. Indeed, integrated and coordinated follow-up should not be a back door for renegotiating the outcome of conferences. Integrated follow-up should be consistent with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 50/227. Indeed, the core concern of integrated follow-up should be to focus on implementation and mobilization of the necessary means and capacities.

19. Review conferences should not add targets for developing countries, while leaving out the need for support from developed countries and the United Nations system. Restating targets during conferences was not useful and the international community must ensure that they were implemented within the agreed time frames, with the necessary international support and enabling environment. A step-by-step approach could be adopted whereby the Second and Third Committees could examine various issues separately then, at a later stage, consider the integrated follow-up of all the conferences together. At a time when the international community was considering ways and means of strengthening the United Nations and its main bodies, including the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council in order to enable them to better respond to new challenges and opportunities, it was vital to look at all the issues together and collectively decide on the whole picture, rather than have isolated discussions on each of its parts.

20. **Mr. O'Brien** (Australia) said that the Second and Third Committees had devoted much, if not most, of their energy over the past few years to organizing major conferences in the economic and social fields. The coming years would focus on conference follow-up. He agreed with the Secretary-General on the need for self-restraint in creating new conferences because of the growing summit fatigue among the general public and many governments.

21. Large conferences detracted from the existing United Nations structure, particularly with respect to the role of the Economic and Social Council, diverted budget funds and Secretariat resources from programmes and on-the-ground assistance and complicated an already challenging calendar. Too little time had been spent on producing practical, fresh and creative ideas on implementation, thus reinforcing the perception in at least some member countries that the United Nations issued declarations but was no use for implementation. That was unfortunate, because the various conferences and summits, particularly the Millennium Summit, the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, had set out goals which provided a clear picture of the task ahead.

22. The challenge was how to turn those goals into reality. Australia was encouraged by the recent debate on implementation of the Millennium development goals, where it had discerned a growing recognition that the United Nations was moving from a period of defining visionary goals to an era of implementation of those agreed objectives. That would require rethinking of how discussions were designed and how the key actors essential to the delivery of on-the-ground results were engaged. In that regard, his delegation was also encouraged by the increased attention being given to the development of practical, results-oriented partnerships with business and other economic sectors, which were contributing to real gains. Moreover, the notion must be dispelled that there was always a direct relationship between high-level attention and the delivery of results so important to those in need. There was a need to make greater use of the existing United Nations structure and bodies, particularly the Economic and Social Council, and to give greater opportunities to engage in non-combative, productive discussions, which identified barriers to implementation and mutually agreed ways to overcome them.

23. He welcomed the Chairman's efforts to bring about a change in the Committee's work practices and also welcomed the Secretary-General's report entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387) and called for the creation of a system which delivered results and not just speech-making opportunities.

24. **Mr. Oratmangun** (Indonesia) said that the most important conferences and summits on economic and social issues over the previous three years had produced critical internationally agreed development goals of eradicating poverty, achieving sustained economic growth and promoting sustainable development. It was therefore the right time to move from the era of commitment and goal-setting to one of firm implementation by the international community.

25. To that end, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the relevant functional commissions of the United Nations, acting as a three-tiered system for the follow-up to and review of conferences, were each playing a crucial role. The challenge, however, was to ensure that those organs considered the outcomes of the meetings as being interlinked and thereby collectively contributed towards achieving an integrated framework for the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals.

26. He wished to emphasize the importance of strengthening the coordinating role of the Economic and Social Council in the work of its functional commissions and subsidiary organs to implement the outcomes of conferences and summits, and the role of the General Assembly in policy formulation and appraisal in the economic, social and related fields. The General Assembly should focus on an integrated and coordinated approach and promote the role of the United Nations in becoming a more effective instrument for achieving development goals. Moreover, the General Assembly should enhance greater coherence between the Council, the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization (WTO) in achieving development goals, particularly in poverty eradication, promotion of food security and enhancing sustainable development.

27. The ongoing reform process, in particular the provisions of General Assembly resolution 50/227 on further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, should be taken into account. His delegation wished to propose the establishment of an open-ended ad hoc working group, under the auspices of the President of the General Assembly, to develop recommendations on ensuring an integrated and coordinated follow-up to the conferences and summits, improve the working methods of the General Assembly and its main bodies, and promote a consolidated report of the Secretary-General. The working group should also examine how best to address the issue of comprehensive follow-up of the major conferences and summits of the 1990s, including their format and periodicity, taking into account the specific thematic unity and follow-up mechanism. The activities should be based on resolution 50/227 and focus on implementation, preservation of thematic unity and complementarity with the ongoing reform processes of the United Nations as a whole.

28. In conclusion, he recalled that in 2004 the International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo in 1994, would have completed 10 years of implementation. Under agenda item 92, the Committee should consider options for reviewing the implementation of the goals and objectives of the Programme of Action issued by the Conference in 1994.

29. **Ms. Msuya** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that the major conferences of the 1990s were testimony to the international community's resolve to address national problems that transcended national boundaries and such issues as poverty, environmental degradation and economic, social and gender imbalances. In order to ensure the realization of the objectives of the summits, the Economic and Social Council had undertaken to promote a coordinated and integrated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits such as the strengthening of links with its functional commissions and other relevant bodies. Successful follow-up and review of implementation also required concerted and joint efforts by the Council and its functional commissions, the Bretton Woods institutions and other organizations. In addition, governments, the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders could play a vital role.

30. Her delegation welcomed the recommendations on the institutional arrangement for a comprehensive and integrated follow-up and implementation of outcomes. If fully implemented, that arrangement would further enhance the intended results. Nevertheless, Member States were crucial to the process, and there was an urgent need for policy adjustment in both industrialized and developing countries. Developing countries should continue to adjust policy to ensure improved service delivery and creation of an environment conducive to investment from both domestic as well as foreign sources, while

focusing clearly on poverty eradication. That would not in itself solve the problem, as shown by the structural adjustment programmes of the 1980s. The developed countries also needed to allow greater market access, improve terms of trade and increase official development assistance.

31. Once policies were in place, there was still an urgent need for additional resources and global partnership. In subsequent reports on the item under consideration, it might be useful to record policy adjustments and the level of registered global partnership to stimulate sustained economic growth in developing countries. Her delegation looked forward to further reports on the implementation of the millennium development goals on conflict prevention, treatment of communicable diseases, and financing for development strategies for sustainable economic growth.

32. It was vital to maintain the political will and momentum of the Millennium Summit in order to translate commitments into firm action and to create an appropriate framework for implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

33. **Mr. Davison** (Unites States of America) said that the major conferences had helped to advance public opinion and policy, develop initiatives and form partnerships. However, the propensity for automatic reviews had proven to be seriously flawed.

34. The functional commissions of the Council should retain primary responsibility for the review and assessment of progress made in implementing conference documents, but with a new focus. The Council should also continue to review progress in the solution of issues such as poverty eradication and gender equality, identify cross-cutting issues and prioritize and coordinate the work of the functional commissions. He agreed that the Council and the General Assembly should broaden dialogue and continue their cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions and WTO. Furthermore, the General Assembly should ensure that the Secretary-General was not burdened by competing or duplicated reporting mandates from distinct conference follow-up mechanisms. The focus should remain squarely on results-oriented implementation.

*The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.*